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Montana SCHOOLS
Fall 1999

Newsletter of the Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Nancy Keenan, Superintendent
Vol. 43, No.1

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Second Class
POSTAGE PAID
Helena, MT 59620
USPS 601690

Getting Youth Connected

Montanans discuss the warning signs of youth violence

Getting kids connected was the dominant theme in a wide spectrum of local and state gatherings of Montanans seeking to address the growing concern of youth violence. While not a new issue to Montana, the tragedy at Columbine High School underscored the urgency and resolve of students, parents, and community members across our state to take a hard look at the causes and ways we can prevent similar events from happening.

Montana Behavorial Initiative

In June, more than 800 teachers, counselors, parents, law enforcement, and community representatives spent a week in Bozeman at the Montana Behavioral Initiative's annual conference. There they gained first hand knowledge on what's being done both in Montana and nationally to deal with youth violence. This information was taken back to the local level and has been the basis of numerous programs and discussions across the state.

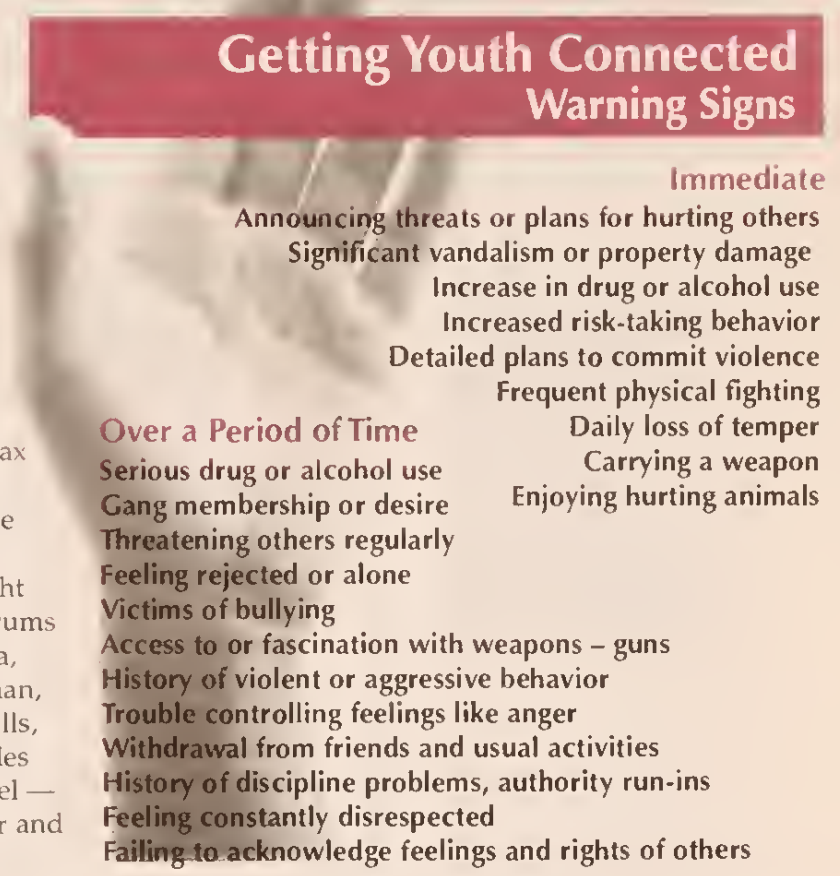
STOP program initiated

> **"It made me feel better. It was good to hear everyone talking about it. And I think people will come up with ideas, and it will work out."**
>
> **— Butte Middle School Student**

This fall, the Montana Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America received a pilot grant from the U.S. Department of Justice for their Students Taking on Prevention (STOP) program. The program involved two-day conferences in Glendive, Missoula, and Great Falls that trained youth from more than 60 schools, giving students specific techniques and programs to take back to their schools to prevent violence.

Community forums

State Superintendent Nancy Keenan was approached by the Montana Psychological Association to sponsor a series of community discussions to help students, parents, teachers, and community leaders recognize the warning signs of violent behavior and how to prevent such behavior. She gave the project her full support and soon was joined by the Montana Parent Teacher Association, the Montana Association of Churches, the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, the Butte Walk Against Violence Committee, U.S. Senator Max Baucus, local schools, and the news media in sponsoring eight community forums — in Missoula, Helena, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Browning, Miles City, and Laurel — during October and November.


Getting Youth Connected
Warning Signs
Immediate
Announcing threats or plans for hurting others
Significant vandalism or property damage
Increase in drug or alcohol use
Increased risk-taking behavior
Detailed plans to commit violence
Frequent physical fighting
Daily loss of temper
Carrying a weapon
Enjoying hurting animals
Over a Period of Time
Serious drug or alcohol use
Gang membership or desire
Threatening others regularly
Feeling rejected or alone
Victims of bullying
Access to or fascination with weapons – guns
History of violent or aggressive behavior
Trouble controlling feelings like anger
Withdrawal from friends and usual activities
History of discipline problems, authority run-ins
Feeling constantly disrespected
Failing to acknowledge feelings and rights of others

Community discussions

Rather than a series of lectures or panel discussions, the forums use a town meeting format. They, begin with *Warning Signs*, a powerful, thought provoking video produced by the American Psychological Association and MTV. The video examines a series of case studies of different aspects of youth violence.

After viewing the video, one parent expressed the anxiety felt by many when he observed, "You feel frustrated. You feel handcuffed and the whole range of emotions. The major frustration is how do you seal the cracks so that kids don't slip through them?"

Connection – the key to prevention

People attending the community forums agreed that it is necessary to help kids feel more connected to other students, their schools, and their communities. Too often communities don't become involved until there is a serious violent incident that draws attention either to a specific individual or occurrence. However, violence rarely occurs in a vacuum; it is most often the end result of a chain of events. There are also warning signs students and adults can be taught to recognize (see the Warning Signs listed above).

Nancy Keenan noted that violence is learned and, as a result, preventable. "The path to serious violence often begins with the put downs, the insults, the trash talk, the bullying. It serves to build a climate of friction between different kids and cliques."

Model good behavior

How people interact is a learned behavior. Young people look to their peers and adults for clues on what is acceptable behavior. A Butte student pointed out, "We learn from you guys. Look in your mirrors. When you come home from a bad day at work and backhand your wife, what do you think your kids will do when they're 20?"

A parent noted, "We've got to have a standard in our community. And we've got to stand up when we see things we don't like and say, 'I don't want that in my community.'"

Suggested solutions from forum participants

One Missoula student had an innovative approach for breaking down some of those barriers between cliques. He systematically identified the different social groups within his school and then invited representatives from each

> **"The path to serious violence often begins with the put downs, the insults, the trash talk, the bullying. It serves to build a climate of friction between different kids and cliques."**
>
> **— State Superintendent Nancy Keenan**

(continued on page 2)

Message from Nancy Keenan

Let's work together to create a caring climate in Montana communities

This fall it has been my pleasure to work with eight Montana communities as they look for solutions to youth violence. The Montana Psychological Association, Montana Parent Teacher Association, Senator Max Baucus, Montana Association of Churches, Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, the Butte Walk Against Violence and local schools, youth organizations, newspapers, and television and radio stations have joined together to sponsor the series of eight *Getting Youth Connected: Community Youth Anti-Violence Forums.*

Montanans of all ages involved

I have been gratified by the level of commitment and participation in each of the communities we visited – especially from our students. Nearly a thousand Montanans came together to offer their insights and to learn more about ways they can help prevent youth violence and create a community climate that values kids and fosters respect and caring.

Although our schools are very safe, Montana is not immune to youth violence. We have seen its most extreme manifestations in communities as diverse as Butte and Lewistown. It has involved students from both public schools and home schools. It has touched all income groups and segments of our state.

This is not a new issue for Montana. Throughout this decade schools and community organizations have worked cooperatively to address the problem of youth violence. While we are rightfully horrified when headlines explode with reports of another unfathomable act involving kids and violence, there are signs progress is being made.

Encouraging trends

Since 1991, Montana has participated in the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This study surveys middle and high school students on more than 50 behaviors that potentially place kids at risk. Recent results show some encouraging trends.

First and foremost, overwhelming numbers of Montana children believe their local schools are safe. Throughout the decade only 3 percent have reported skipping school because they did not feel safe.

The results in several other important areas show improvement. In 1991, 42 percent of Montana high school students reported they had been in a physical fight in the past 12 months. The 1999 survey found this had dropped to 32 percent. In 1991 nearly a third, 31 percent, reported they seriously considered attempting suicide in the preceding months. In 1999 this figure had dropped to 19 percent. The number of students reporting they took a weapon to school is also down from 14 percent in 1991 to 9 percent in 1999.

Fostering care and respect

While these current trends may be encouraging, we can't become complacent. The effort against youth violence is an ongoing struggle; we can't for a moment stop addressing these problems. It remains unacceptable that any students engage in behaviors that put themselves and their fellow classmates at risk.

The *Community Youth Anti-Violence* forums have sought to get beyond the "headlines" and look to the root causes of violence. They seek to continue the dialogue, because we all need to work together if we are going to prevent incidents of violence. Above all, the forums seek to create a community climate that fosters caring and respect – a climate that does not tolerate bullying, put downs, and name calling; a climate that connects kids with their community.

I know you are concerned. Hopefully, this month's *Montana Schools* cover article will provide some useful tips on fostering these efforts in your local community.

Nancy Keenan

Montana Schools (USPS 601690) is published each October, January, March and May. If you are interested in submitting an article or information for publication, please contact Beth Satre, Editor, either by phone (444-4397) or e-mail (*bsatre@state.mt.us*). Deadline for articles is the 15th of the month prior to each publishing month. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena MT 59620-2501.

Community forums

Continued from page 1

to a retreat to discuss how they could improve the school climate for all students.

A Bozeman senior noted, "We need to not put anyone down. They just want to be accepted."

Another Bozeman student observed that it's not always the overt put downs that are problems, "If you ask me it's not the taunting, it's the ignoring. When you walk through a door a thousand eyes are diverted."

Many people pointed out the need of mentoring for kids. Older kids talking to younger kids can often make a strong impact on what is and is not acceptable behavior. And study after study has pointed out that one caring adult can make all the difference in a child's life. Most of the time, that adult is a parent or teacher, but it can be anyone.

> **"We've got to have a standard in our community. And we've got to stand up when we see things we don't like and say, 'I don't want that in my community.'"**
> — A Montana Parent

George Watson, State Coordinator for the Montana Psychological Association, pointed out, "There are no simple solutions, but we have to move from just wishing something will happen to actually doing something. It doesn't have to be something big or spectacular to be worthwhile. It just has to be a step in the right direction."

A Butte middle school student summed up the meetings best when she concluded, "It made me feel hetter. It was good to hear everyone talking about it. And I think people will come up with ideas and it will work out." ■

Technology impacts certification process

The Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) certification system has undergone a technological transformation. While the new, improved system is still in its infancy, the eventual result will be easier and more immediate access to Montana certification information.

New electronic system

As of August, all certification procedures are being processed using an electronic system that will ultimately consolidate data pertinent to Montana certification, permit on screen tracking of the application process, reduce the reliance on paper files and microfilm, and enable OPI certification specialists to provide more immediate responses to telephone or e-mail inquiries.

Eventually, the system will also be accessible through the Internet. When finalized, schools will be able to access the system for accreditation activities, personnel inquiries, or district human resource processes. Microfilmed records, including transcripts, will be separate and will, for the time being, require a manual search. While documents cannot yet be scanned for on-line processing, this may also be available in the future.

New certification form

Perhaps the most visible change is the new *Educator License.* Since July, educators either renewing or receiving Montana certification have been issued this two-sided form, which provides more detailed information about an individual's certification and renewal requirements.

Although educators are still "certified," many states are changing the terminology of certification for teachers, specialists, and administrators to the more professionally oriented "licensing." Within the broader dialogue, licensing will be the "professional permit to perform the service," while certification will "identify specific levels of accomplishment," like National Board Certification.

A work in progess

A new system requires a certain amount of "tweaking" after it becomes operational, since even the best design cannot plan for every eventuality. Comments and suggestions for improving OPI's new certification system are always welcome. ■

—Don Freshour, OPI Certification and Licensure Director

Please note ...

Montana's Teacher Education Program Standards (TEPS) are currently being reviewed. First adopted in 1979, these standards have guided teacher, administrator, and specialist preparation in Montana.

Draft revisions of the TEPS in most content areas are posted on METNET for your review. Look for the TEPS reference in your METNET menu. Comments may be sent through e-mail (*cert@state.mt.us*); please use "TEPS" as your subject. Written comments should be mailed to Don Freshour, OPI, PO Box 202501, Helena MT 59620-2501. Comments will be directed to the appropriate committees for review. ■

Montana Legislature endorses the "Eddie Eagle" safety program

The 1999 Montana Legislature passed a Joint Resolution (HJ 14) encouraging Montana elementary schools to use the *Eddie Eagle Gun Safety Education Program* to help prevent firearm-related accidents among children.

The *Eddie Eagle* program promotes gun accident prevention for children in grades pre-K-6 by teaching them the simple safety message, "STOP! Don't touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult," when they come across unsecured firearms. The program teaches children that guns are not toys, promoting safe behavior while making no value judgement about whether guns are good or bad. Since it started in 1988, the *Eddie Eagle* program has reached over 12 million children in all 50 states. In 1996 it received the National Safety Council's Silver Award of Merit.

Materials available

The *Eddie Eagle* program has numerous resources for teachers, including student materials, videos, teacher guides, and promotional materials. Through donations, the National Rifle Association is able to make *Eddie Eagle* program materials available free of charge to a limited number of Montana classrooms, based on a first come, first served basis.

To learn more

To get information about the *Eddie Eagle* program resources or the availability of materials at no charge or to ask general questions about the program, call 800-231-0752 or visit the Web site <*http://www.nraila.org/safety/eddie*>. ■

1999-2000 Byrd Scholars set to make a difference

"The future looks pretty good right now." That was the sentiment echoed by many of last spring's Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship candidates. And for them, the future should look good; they are an impressive cross-section of the best that Montana's high schools have to offer.

Scholarship program

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program makes grants to provide funds for scholarships for outstanding high school graduates who show promise of continued excellence. In Montana, the Office of Public Instruction administers the program.

To be eligible, a student must score a 32 on the ACT exam or 1440 on the SAT. Beyond that, student applicants are ranked according to their involvement in community and school and their academic performance during high school. Each student also submits a short essay outlining educational goals and objectives.

Montana's 1999-2000 scholars

Last spring, 22 Montana students were named Byrd scholars. Each received a $1,500 scholarship to apply toward college during the 1999-2000 academic year. The scholarship may be renewed for up to three more years as long as the student maintains certain academic standards.

These articulate 1999-2000 scholars have a clear vision of where they are going. Their post-graduate plans run the gamut from orthopedic surgeon to county extension agent; many "just want to change the world," but haven't yet chosen their path. This fall, some departed Montana to attend Harvard, Concordia, Rice, Stanford, and Brigham Young. Others opted to enroll at one of Montana's universities. Whatever their college choices, many have a goal of returning to Montana to build a life and make a contribution here.

Wanting to make a difference

In fact, a recurring theme in the students' essays was the desire to make a difference somewhere in the world or in the lives of others. They recognize that they have more than the average number of opportunities. And, they are also practical and farsighted enough to see that they can use their talents both to secure personal rewards and to benefit the community. ■

— Linda Gardner, OPI Staff

To apply ...

The Robert C. Byrd Honor Scholarship awards are given each year to approximately 23 high school seniors and graduates of GED programs. This federally funded award is presented to students who show academic excellence and community involvement.

Applications for the upcoming year

Information packets will be mailed to high school counselors in January, with applications due in early March. Home schools can contact OPI in January for a copy of the application form. For more information, contact Linda Gardner (tel: 444-1951; e-mail: *ligardner@state.mt.us*) or Judy Birch (tel: 444-5663; e-mail: *jbirch@state.mt.us*).

GLOBE in Montana

Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) is a worldwide science and education program coordinating the work of K-12 students, teachers, and scientists who are studying to better understand the global environment. Today more than 10,000 students and teachers have been trained in workshops around the world to use GLOBE materials, instruments, and protocols in community settings to reach higher standards in science and mathematics, while contributing to the scientific understanding of our planet Earth.

Montana participants

Montana students and teachers are counted among the earliest trained participants whose data — shared via the Internet — contribute to the research databases of international scientific agencies and university laboratories and field stations.

- ✔ Jim Lane, teacher at Charles B. Murray Elementary School in Sheridan, MT, and his students have been conducting ongoing research of air temperature and precipitation since 1995.
- ✔ A cooperative project last year with two other schools in the U.S. and two in Sweden gave Sheridan students an opportunity to analyze snow falling in their schoolyard and compare it with data from snow falling around the globe.
- ✔ Over 40 Montana schools started the school year by designing their own scientific projects in this hands-on science, math, art, reading, writing, and career development program.
- ✔ A summer workshop on the campus of the University of Montana (UM) brought together students, teachers, and scientists to share what they learned with Peggy Finarelli, GLOBE Deputy Director, and other colleagues from around the U.S.

EOS Education Project

UM–Missoula is also the location of the Earth Observing System (EOS) Education Project, which disseminates earth system science imagery and supportive curriculum to an international K-16 education community. A key component of the EOS Project is an outreach program that combines in-service and pre-service training with GLOBE program protocols, the National Geographic Society's Geography Themes and National Geography Standards. Participants also get training in state-of-the-art computer technologies to access and utilize EOS data in the classroom.

To learn more

Elementary, middle, or high school students, teachers, or parents wanting to learn more about the GLOBE program are encouraged to contact Dr. Georgia Cobb, GLOBE Franchise Coordinator, UM–Missoula (e-mail: *gcobb@selway.umt.edu*). or visit the GLOBE Alliance Web page <*http://www.globealliance.com*>. For more information about the UM EOS Education Project, contact John Kuglin, Director (tel: 800-411-0341; e-mail: *jkuglin@selway.umt.edu*). ■

— Ron Lukenbill, OPI Title I Specialist

Teacher shortages reported

Enrollments are declining in Montana schools, but many secondary programs are experiencing chronic shortages in applicants for teaching positions.

Survey of school administrators

In early 1999, OPI's Certification Division prepared and distributed a survey at regional Montana Association of School Superintendents meetings. Administrators from 92 districts completed it. Their responses confirmed that some schools finding it hard to fill some teaching positions.

Where is the shortfall and why?

Teacher shortages in music narrowly edged out those in special education, math, and library science for the most frequent. Grouped close behind were art, science, vocational agriculture, and Spanish.

The survey asked respondents to suggest possible causes. The top four responses were:

1. fewer persons are entering those teaching areas that are experiencing shortages;
2. Montana's low salaries for beginning teachers, especially compared to nearby states;
3. too few applicants seeking rural employment; and
4. a national shortage in specific secondary categories.

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School-to-Work takes root in Montana

Last October, a day or two before I moved to Montana, I stopped in at one of those ten-minute oil change places that have sprung up in recent years. A young man served me; he was polite, presentable, but unable to navigate through the standardized procedure for checking and topping off engine fluids. More than 10 minutes passed, and the ever-watchful owner intervened. He quickly finished my servicing and patiently pointed out the employee's errors.

"New employee?" I couldn't help asking, as I handed him my credit card.

"Oh, no!" he said. "He's been here since January."

"High school kid?"

"Nope, he graduated last year," he answered. "Kevin's my nephew. He started at Pitt last fall, but dropped out after the first semester." He laughed. "Actually my brother dropped him out. Said he wasn't going to pay for him to study engineering and make Cs — Kevin finished in the top 20 in his class." He returned my credit card. "I can see what his problem was at Pitt, just doesn't know how to get organized or follow directions."

"Is he going to go back to Pitt?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Not until he shows he's ready," he said. I signed the credit card slip, and he handed me the yellow copy.

"Top of his class and can't follow our servicing checklist," he said. "What are they teaching 'em?"

Months before becoming involved with Montana School-to-Work, I saw the problem firsthand. Far too many students don cap and gown and walk across the graduation stage and are fundamentally unprepared for whatever comes next.

The School-to-Work (STW) Opportunities Act of 1994 provides a national framework for building local systems to ensure that *all* students can acquire both academic and technical skills to prepare them for further education and careers. One of the Act's underlying premises is that every student — including the college-bound — will benefit from learning about careers and be better prepared to pursue those careers by applying real-world experiences to their academic concepts.

State STW participants

Montana has a State Partnership and an Advisory Board that provides direction and input to the statewide STW effort. The State Partners include representatives from the Governor's Office, the Office of Public Instruction, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education/Board of Regents, the departments of Labor and Industry, Commerce, and Public Health and Human Services, along with the Montana Job Training Partnership, Inc. The 40-member Advisory Board provides community input and expert advice to the state STW System Team.

In 1999-2000, 111 high school districts and the related communities will be building their local STW systems.

Making STW work in Montana

Montana's STW initiative faces the same challenges as other educational efforts in our state. These include the vast geography of the state, the relative isolation of many local communities, and the small pool of local employers with whom to partner.

Another thorny issue is the difficulty of integrating academics, work experience, and vocational education. Classroom teachers often are reluctant to alter traditional curricula to include work-based elements. In many cases, they also feel unqualified to evaluate, for example, a 'term paper' that takes the form of a comprehensive business plan for a school-based enterprise.

The Systems Team is taking a leadership role in helping local communities overcome these and other obstacles to establishing and maintaining sustainable STW systems. Many innovative, pragmatic solutions are being developed around Montana. Rather than espouse 'policy' statements from Helena, Systems Team members have planned an aggressive program of on-site work sessions (as opposed to site tours) where the stakeholders will roll up their sleeves and address local concerns.

Making progress

Montana's STW effort is relatively young, but early results are encouraging. Participating communities are genuinely excited about the possibilities of STW and genuinely interested in providing the best possible future for *all* of Montana's kids. The underlying goal of long-term sustainability cannot be truly evaluated for several years, of course, but the local communities are doing the right things to build a solid School-to-Work foundation.

I am frequently asked how to evaluate the progress of the local STW systems, given their unique structures.

Good question, and one that will receive considerable attention by the System Team. But in the meantime, I'll conduct some highly informal assessments of STW progress by having my oil changed every 3000 miles. ■

— Carl B. Stevens, OPI School-to-Work Specialist

STW in Montana

Although Montana formally began work on a statewide system in 1994, many STW components such as school-based enterprises, vocational and cooperative education, and school- business- and community partnerships are time-honored traditions in Montana. What distinguishes STW, however, is the integration and expansion of these components into a *system* of education. STW is no longer a replaceable "Program of the Year," nor is it just an enhanced Vo-Ed program; rather, it aims to improve career awareness and academic relevance for *all* kids. Above all, STW in Montana is about local communities.

School-to-Work's key components

At its core, STW consists of three basic components:

Work-Based Learning, which includes such activities as:
- job training
- work experience
- workplace mentoring
- instruction in workplace competencies and all aspects of an industry

School-Based Learning, which includes such activities as:
- career counseling
- the selection of a career focus
- the integration of academics and vocational education
- an evaluation
- a secondary/post-secondary articulation

Connecting Activities, which might entail:
- matching students with local employers
- encouraging the participation of employers
- providing technical assistance to schools, students and employers
- helping integrate school-based and work-based learning
- collecting and analyzing participants' post-program outcomes

Field Notes

Kalispell launches School-to-Work system

After a year of committee planning and with the hiring of a full-time STW coordinator, Kalispell School District 5 (SD5) began the transition phase of its School-to-Work (STW) system by developing several successful programs. The Steering Committee, formed in the spring of 1998, formulated a number of objectives for the transition phase in the 1999-2000 school year. Some of those objective are

- ✔ forming one-on-one partnerships with schools and business,
- ✔ developing career exploration and/or internships with local businesses, and
- ✔ student career planning programs for all students.

SD5 has developed three programs to help attain these objectives. While each district's or school's STW approach is based on local needs and necessarily unique, these program ideas may prove helpful to others implementing STW systems in Montana.

Adopt a School Partnerships

In Kalispell's *Adopt a School* program, a business connects or partners with a particular school to improve the quality of education services and to foster mutual relationships. Equipment donations, office supplies, speakers, guest teachers, mentors and tutors, scholarships and grants, or company tours are some of the types of partnership support. In approaching partnership development, it is best to determine the particular needs of each school and then approach a business that can fulfill those needs. The STW coordinator schedules periodic reviews with the parties to determine effectiveness and to assist in sustaining the partnership over the long-term.

Five businesses in the Flathead Valley — two banks, an electric cooperative, a fitness and health center, and a hotel chain — are currently involved in the program. The business partners have provided reading tutors for the *America Reads* program, funding for field trips, volunteers for special school events, contributions for teacher training, student community service with the businesses, company tours, and use of school facilities for consolidated employer training or activities. The primary benefit of the *Adopt a School* program is that teachers, students, business people, and school administrators become linked in the common cause of improving education.

Career Explorations and Internships

Another of the SD5 objectives is to develop career explorations (CEs) and internships among students, teachers, and businesses in order to allow high school students to explore career choices and gain work experience connected to classroom learning. CEs are generally two to three weeks in duration, while an internship

(Continued on page 5)

OPI uses federal review to improve special education services

In Spring 1999, a team from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) visited Montana to monitor the Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) general supervision of special education services in the state and to determine whether Montana students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in accord with the Individuals' With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

> **Whatever direction we take, whatever process we implement, we must always keep in mind, that 'If it's good for kids, the answer is Yes.'"**
>
> **—Bob Runkel, Administrator OPI Special Education**

As a part of its review, the OSEP monitoring team held public meetings in March then returned in April. After spending a week visiting several Montana districts, OSEP officials met with the State Special Education Advisory Committee, which served as the state steering committee for the monitoring, and OPI staff to discuss OSEP's preliminary impressions.

Preliminary impressions positive

The OSEP team commented favorably on the creativity they had seen in districts in the provision of services to students with disabilities and the easy access districts, advocates, students, and parents have to OPI staff to answer questions and provide technical assistance. OSEP identified a number of OPI initiatives that have had a positive impact on services to students with disabilities such as the:

- *Montana Behavioral Initiative*
- *Comprehensive System of Personnel Development*, which helps the state determine specific training needs and approaches to meeting those needs
- *Training in Inclusive Education (TIE) Project*, which helped districts establish responsible programming that includes students with disabilities in the regular classroom
- *Early Assistance Program*, which allows parents and schools the opportunity to resolve disputes prior to entering costly legal proceedings
- *Education Interpreter Training Project*, which is a systematic, consistent approach to comprehensive training of school interpreters for students who are deaf or have hearing impairments

Areas to address

The review also identified some areas OPI should address to assure continued quality in special education services. Those areas are:

- additional training in special education for general education teachers;
- increased state funding for support of special education services;
- programs for Native American children;
- special education services for youth to assist with their transition from school to adult life; and
- OPI's monitoring process

(Continued on page 8)

Schools urged to have trained personnel on hand for medical emergencies

The 1999 Montana Legislature passed HJR 13, which directs the OPI and the Board of Public Education to encourage local school districts and schools to make every effort to "ensure that identified personnel trained in First AID and CPR be present in every school in Montana."

State Superintendent Nancy Keenan agrees that our children's health and safety is our top priority. And, because accidents and disease do occur, school personnel must be prepared to act in a safe and responsible manner. Keenan noted, "In a rural state like Montana, where access to medical services is sometimes limited, this just makes sense."

The 13 Montana Red Cross Chapters listed below provide training in both First AID and CPR. Schools can contact the chapter in their region for further information on services, courses and options. Local hospitals may also have training programs. ■

Red Cross Chapter	Tel	Fax	e-mail address
• Bear Paw – Havre	265-1500	265-4094	redcross@hi-line.net
• Big Sky – Great Falls	727-2212	452-0965	mtarc@powercomm.net
• Eastern MT – Glendive	377-4177	377-2910	arcemt@mcn.net
• Five Rivers – Bozeman	587-4611	587-4410	5rivers@in-tch.com
• Hi-Line – Glasgow	228-9262	228-9262	hiline@nemontel.net
• Lake – Polson	883-6427	883-6427	arclcmt@cyberport.net
• Lewis & Clark – Helena	442-0260	442-9570	redcross@mt.net
• Midland Empire – Billings	245-3512	245-3992	redcross@digisys.net
• Northwest Kalispell	752-6433	755-7579	redcrossmec@montana.net
• Park County – Livingston	222-4134	222-1677	pcarc@mcn.net
• Pioneer – Butte	782-8358	782-9478	pioneers@crossnet.org
• Tri-County – Lewistown	538-6881	538-6881	rcross@mcn.net
• Western Valleys – Missoula	549-6441	721-9980	redcross@bigsky.net

Field Notes, cont.

occurs over a semester or 90 hours.

In developing a specific program, the STW coordinator discusses with teachers or department heads the courses that would benefit from work experiences and observations and then seeks out businesses that can correlate work-site experiences to the classroom. The team of coordinator, teacher, and business representative mutually determine a set of learning objectives, which are in synch with classroom instruction and actual work experience.

Teachers select student volunteers, and the STW coordinator provides an orientation class for teachers and draws up an agreement, which outlines the standards and expectations, that the student candidates, parents, and teacher review and co-sign. The business assigns the student a mentor, who provides training, supervision, and evaluation(s). Teachers and the STW coordinator visit the work-site to check on student progress and to obtain feedback from the business.

This fall, 14 pilot CEs or internships went into effect. Some involve only one student, while others incorporate an entire class into individual rotations, business tours or seminars. Businesses involved include the regional hospital, an investment company, banking firms, a radio broadcasting company, auto maintenance and welding companies, an electrical co-cooperative, and a heating and air-conditioning business. Students interested in trade occupations and planning to attend two-year technical schools as well as students planning to attend four-year colleges are expected to take part. For example, students from the senior physics course will spend three weeks working with an electrical co-cooperative, learning real physics applications while also observing business management and operations. In any career exploration or internship, the

> **This fall, 14 pilot career explorations or internships went into effect. Some involve only one student, while others incorporate an entire class into individual rotations, business tours or seminars.**

results are classroom learning made more relevant, strengthening of career choices, verification of future education plans, and young citizens better prepared for the future. Keys to success are close cooperation between teachers and businesses, brought together by the STW coordinator.

Career Planning

The district has also instituted a career-planning program for students in grades 8 and 10. As part of required computer instruction, students take the DISCOVER computer applications and career exploration course. After completing this course, students then use the PEAKS career planning guidebook, which was developed by the career center advisor at Flathead High School. The guidebook correlates students' interests, abilities, and values inventories for possible career options, allowing students to determine which occupations may best suit their individual needs and attributes. The PEAKS guidebook provides the student with a planning matrix for high school and post secondary education to help them map out their future choices. The DISCOVER/PEAKS program is not only for students, but also a tool for parents or counselors to assist students in making informed career choices.

In Summary

Kalispell's SD5 has a variety of programs in place or being developed under its STW System. The career planning, partnership, and career exploration/internship programs are off to an excellent start, due to outstanding teacher, administration, community, and business support. ■

— Dan Fey, STW Coordinator, Kalispell School District 5

"Field Notes" is a forum for Montana educators, students, parents, and others involved in education. Views presented in Field Notes do not necessarily represent the views of the Office of Public Instruction.

This issue's Field Notes come from Kalispell.

Montana's Transition System — helping students with

While the transition between life as a student to life as a working adult presents a wide array of opportunities, it also poses many challenges — for families and communities as well as individual students. This is true for everyone, and students with disabilities often face additional difficulties.

Five years ago, with support from a U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) Grant, Montana embarked on a comprehensive project to establish a cohesive, statewide system of services that will give students with disabilities the support they need in their last years of high school to help them prepare for life as an adult.

Creating a cohesive system of support

Partners in the transition project include the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) staff who work in the areas of developmental disabilities, vocational rehabilitation, and mental health, Parents Lets Unite for Kids (PLUK), the Rural Institute on Disabilities at the UM–Missoula, the Montana Center on Disabilities at MSU-Billings, and regional and local coordinating councils. This list represents, in some way, all of the individuals who are making policy, and coordinating or providing services as well as the parents of students receiving those services in the state.

As is characteristic of many states, the current outlook for students with disabilities graduating from schools in Montana is not as good as it could be. Positive examples of secondary programs, transition planning, and adult service programs do exist. Unfortunately, however, a cohesive system built upon a partnership between schools, families, adult service providers, employers, and other community agencies is not yet in place.

The focus

The transition project focuses on creating a *Montana Transition System* that increases the availability, access, and quality of transition assistance available to Montana youth with disabilities. The aim is to create lasting statewide change through the development of policies, procedures, systems, and local implementation sites. To accomplish this, Montana's transition plan includes a powerful systemic focus in six areas:

- ✔ state level interagency planing and coordination
- ✔ the development of transition implementation sites
- ✔ technical assistance and training centers
- ✔ policy development and systemic support for lasting change
- ✔ evaluation for future improvement
- ✔ dissemination of information.

Much remains to be done, but much has been accomplished. The information on these two pages highlights some of the transition elements currently in place in Montana. If you want more information about the statewide project, please contact Martha Lehman, OPI Transition Specialist (tel: 444-1579, e-mail: *mlehman@state.mt.us*). ■

Regional Transition Coordinating Councils

Given Montana's large size and unique regional differences, Transition Project partners decided to divide the state. To insure continuity and coordination with necessary resources, they opted to use the same five geographic regions as many of the other agencies that provide human services in Montana.

A Regional Transition Coordinating Council was established in each area. The councils have a membership consisting of educators, students, families, adult service personnel, employers, and other community members. This broad-based representation provides both a wealth of experience and a well-rounded perspective about the needs facing transition services in each region. The councils are charged with identifying regional priorities for transition services.

Does vocational rehabilitation work?

In the disability statistics abstract, *Vocational Rehabilitation in the U.S.* published by the USDOE in March 1998, author H. Stephen Kaye writes that "about 60 percent of the people receiving VR services eventually complete their programs and find jobs."

These statistics bear out for Montana as well. The Billings-area supported employment provider Job Connection, Inc. has trained over 515 jobs in more than 170 different companies in the Billings community. They are currently helping about 75 people maintain employment every month and have 40-50 people waiting for help to locate employment.

As of December 31, 1998, their clients had earned over $3.2 million as employed, productive adults. ■

Source: FY 1995 administrative data from the Rehabilitation Services Administration

Transitions training links educators to Vocational Rehabilitation

Information about transition services available for youth with disabilities is a critical element of their success once they leave school. Often, though, educators are unaware of the resources they can access.

Training available

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) continues to offer training to school personnel in the eastern half of the state. Grants awarded through Transitions Regions I and III have provided funds for school staff to travel to area MVR. Training is provided in Vocational Rehabilitation eligibility, services, funding, planning, and practices. Connections are made with area rehabilitation counselors, and students who may need services are often discussed.

After receiving training, educators often meet with other adult service programs. They have explored area colleges, *Job Service* programs, and Developmental Disabilities programs. Participants have visited and learned about Job Connection, Inc., a Billings'-area supported employment provider or had the opportunity to visit Parents Lets Unite for Kids (PLUK).

Improved communication

For years, MVR counselors have traveled to schools to meet students or talk to guidance counselors, special education teachers, transitions specialists, and school administrators. Information about MVR still does not seem to reach students and parents. Many referrals of disabled graduating seniors are received late in the spring. The grant training aims at improving MVR/local school district communications and informing educators about resources available through adult service programs. The training emphasizes helping disabled individuals prepare for and enter employment.

To date, the transitions training has been a success. By this past summer, personnel from about 15 schools in eastern Montana have received training. Rural schools that have limited community transitions resources have explored additional options for their students and can pass the information on to students and parents in their communities. Some participants have stated they will immediately use what they have learned about Internet Web sites relating to job exploration and health.

The grant funding pays for transportation to and from Billings, Miles City, or Great Falls. It covers room and per diem at state rates, and can pay a stipend when schools are not paying salary. Training materials are provided. Educators can call the MVR district office in Billings (888-279-7532 or 248-4801) to learn more about the grants and to schedule a day of training. ■

—Chuck Leggate, Regional Administrator, Vocational Rehabilitation –Billings

h disabilities make the transition from school to work

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Services

For years, students with disabilities have applied to Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) Services to help them as they move from school life to adult community life. Two primary pieces of federal legislation — the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments — direct MVR's work in the state.

Transition activities and MVR's role

According to these two federal statutes, transition services consist of a coordinated set of activities for a student that promotes that individual's movement from school to such postschool pursuits as college, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation.

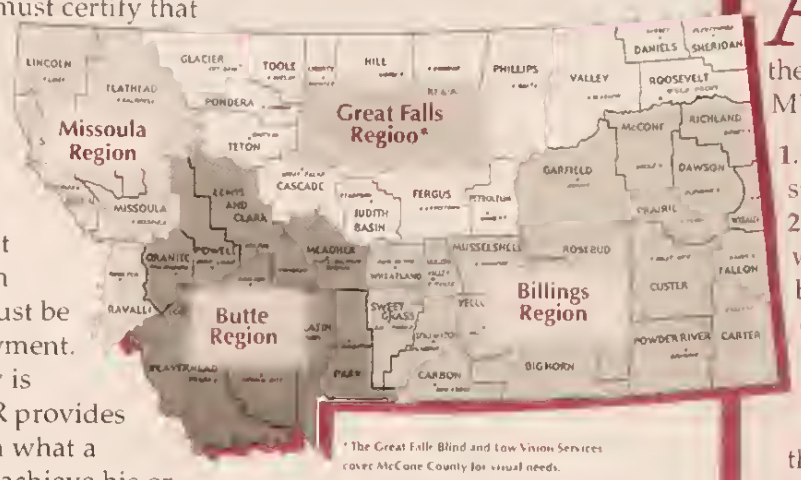
The role of the rehabilitation system is primarily one of planning for a student's years after leaving school. MVR's services are not intended to shift the responsibility of service delivery from education to rehabilitation during the transition years. Rather, the intent is to bridge the "vocational resources" of the school with those of MVR at the point of transition.

MVR services based on eligibility

MVR is an eligibility program, not an entitlement. There is no age requirement, nor does a student need to be receiving special education services to apply. Before students can qualify, however, an MVR counselor must certify that they have a disability that is a substantial impediment to employment, interfering with their ability to get and keep a job. In addition, they must be ready for employment.

Once eligibility is established, MVR provides services based on what a student needs to achieve his or her goal of employment. MVR will provide for the development and completion of a student's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) before the student leaves the school setting. ■

MRV Districts



* The Great Falls Blind and Low Vision Services cover McCone County for visual needs.

MVR District Offices

For more information about MVR services in your area, please look at the map to locate the MVR district that serves your county.

*Billings ..... Voice – 248-4801/TDD – 248-2585 .. Toll free – 888-270-7532
*Butte ..... Voice/TDD – 496-4925 ..... Toll free – 888-279-7531
*Great Falls .. Voice– 454-6060/TDD – 454-6080... Toll free – 888-279-7527
*Missoula ..... Voice/TDD – 329-5400 ..... Toll free – 888-279-7528

*Each district also has satellite offices that service specific counties.

What services to expect from MVR

Although individual circumstances may require different services, the list below outlines a "typical" MVR service sequence.

1. Initial contact between the student and MVR.
2. Face-to-face interview in which the MVR counselor begins to gather the necessary disability and medical information. Additional contact with the doctor, family, school, etc. may be needed to supplement the information gathered at the interview.
3. MVR establishes eligibility for services.
4. A *Comprehensive Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs* is completed.
5. The MVR counselor and student develop an *Individualized Plan for Employment* (IPE).
6. The Provision of appropriate services leading to employment.
7. Employment.

Survey reveals that many Americans with disabilities want to work, but face a difficult job market

In April and May of 1998, the National Organization on Disability sponsored a survey that interviewed 1,000 Americans with disabilities who were 16 or older. Their answers showed that Americans with disabilities continue to lag well behind other Americans with regard to employment. Below are some of the survey's key findings that pertain to employment.

- ✔ Only three out of 10 working-age adults with disabilities, who are 18 to 64, work full- or part-time. This compares to eight out of 10 of those without disabilities.
- ✔ Among those adults with disabilities who are not employed, seven out of 10 say they would prefer to be working.
- ✔ Two out of three adults with disabilities say that their disability has either prevented them from getting (41 percent) or made it more difficult for them to get (26 percent) the kind of job they would like to have.
- ✔ Among adults with disabillities who work full-time, fewer than half say that their work requires them to use their full talents or abilities.
- ✔ Fewer than half (45 percent) of adults with disabilites say that people generally treat them as an equal after they learn they have a disability.

A team effort: Lance finds the *"ideal"* job

Can students with severe disabilities work in the community? Sure they can, if we take the time to find out how best to support them and tap into their contributions!

Lance's story

I met Lance and his family in December 1997. Lance was 16 and receiving special education services in a self-contained class-room with several other students. Lance doesn't read, count, recognize numbers or letters, and the few words he uses are hard to understand. He needs support dressing and performing all personal hygiene routines. He has always had 24-hour adult supervision.

Lance had performed informal work tasks at school like bringing his classes' attendance slip to the school office, but he had no formal work experience. His IEP team hadn't yet discussed work as a long term goal or what he would do after graduation. In fact, the team lacked a clear idea of what he could do for employment. Before they could help Lance get a job, the following questions needed to be answered: What can he do? What would he like to do? Would anyone hire him? Can he really work?

The transition process starts

To find out what Lance could do, Wendy Holmes of the Bitterroot Special Education Cooperative and Fred Petak, Lance's Special Education teacher, completed a Vocational Profile for Lance. The profile, a useful tool for people with significant support needs, starts with the assumption that everyone, regardless of the severity of their disability, can work in an individual, paid job in the community.

Holmes and Petak spent about 50 hours gathering information from people who knew Lance well. They hung out with him at home, at school, and in the community. After the data was compiled, Lance's Profile team reconvened to process the information collected.

We all left that meeting with a list of tasks and ideas for potential jobs. We knew Lance loved to interact with people, run errands, keep active, and go places in the car or school bus. We also knew that his stamina for work would be low at first, that he would need to work in a location where he wouldn't be around traffic or other potential dangers, that his work tasks would need to combine sitting and moving around, and that he would need support to learn the job along with ongoing support for the life of the job.

Photo Karen Hedges

Lance, along with his job coach Gynette Greenup, on his recycling rounds at Hamilton's Marcus Daly Hospital.

Although we had a lot more information about Lance, we still lacked that compelling vision of what, exactly, his ideal job would be and what he could offer an employer. For that he needed to be "on the job."

The job trials

The first job Lance tried was at a local café in Darby. He passed out menus, greeted customers, put away dishes, and filled condiments. We learned that Lance wasn't shy around people, he

(Continued on page 12).

Bold Goal: Public Education K-12

Whereas: The Montana business community has a vested interest in an effective, high quality elementary and secondary education system, and

Whereas: Effective education plays an important role and contributes to the economic vitality of Montana, through educating future employees and making the state attractive to business and industries considering locating here, and

Whereas: The State of Montana is responsible for an accreditation process that holds schools accountable to "quality" guaranteed by the Montana Constitution, and

Whereas: Schools of Quality focus on student results and continuous school-wide improvement, and

Whereas: Schools of Quality use a school improvement planning process to integrate comprehensive, coherent school-to-work education that prepares a competitive work force,

Therefore be it resolved that:

The Montana Ambassadors encourage and support responsible accreditation reform initiatives and related community-based school improvement efforts that focus on rigorous standards, work-based learning opportunities and strict reliable school-wide accountability.

The Montana Ambassadors applaud the growing number of schools who have voluntarily organized to improve learning results through a new, alternative accreditation model, Performance-Based Accreditation.

The Montana Ambassadors recognize those schools that incorporate work-based opportunities in their school improvement efforts.

The Montana Ambassadors further express appreciation to the Montana Board of Public Education, the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and the Montana Office of Public Instruction for jointly supporting school improvement through accreditation.

Title I School Improvement

Federal regulations require that state education agencies conduct an annual review to ascertain whether their state's schools meet the criteria, which the state has adopted through its transitional accountability procedures, for two consecutive years. The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) used standardized test scores from Spring 1998 and Spring 1999 to identify those schools or districts that do not. They are then designated as Title I school improvement schools.

A plan for improvement

Once identified, schools must develop or revise a school plan for improvement. They are encouraged to build on the school's current improvement structures, such as MISTA, Effective Schools, Onward to Excellence, Title I Schoolwide Program, etc. Title I School Improvement should not be something separate; rather, it should mesh with the processes already present.

Statewide system of support

These schools can call upon a cadre of 23 "Distinguished Educators" with various areas of expertise for consultations, presentations, or school site visits. Additionally, schools and districts may use the two Title I School Improvement Specialists along with other OPI staff to meet their varied needs. To learn more about school improvement and the statewide system of support, visit the Title I Home page on the OPI web site at <*http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/main.html*> or call your Title I Specialist. ■

—Marsha Davis, OPI Title I School Improvement Specialist

Federal review

Continued from page 5

which appears to focus more on process than on outcome.

State level discussion

During the summer, OPI 's Special Education Division staff met to discuss and review the current monitoring process. Some of the questions raised were: How do we link with other aspects of schools' education programs? What data are important to gather and share? Are we too thorough? How can we better involve the school's public in the monitoring process? What types of information should we collect to have a comprehensive look at student outcomes? Can we make reports useful and available to the public? What is more important: process or outcome?

We intend to study all aspects of our current monitoring process, determine what needs to change, and begin implementing those changes in the next year or two. Bob Runkel, Division Administrator, will be providing information to Montana's schools as we move forward in our review.

The bottom line, Runkel said, is "whatever direction we take, whatever process we implement, we must always keep in mind, that 'If it's good for kids, Yes.'" ■

—Tim Harris, OPI Special Education Policy and Compliance Specialist

Montana Ambassadors support MISTA and Performance-Based Accreditation

Last May, the Montana Ambassadors demonstrated their support for Performance-Based Accreditation (PBA) and the work of MISTA (Montanans Improving Schools Through Accreditation) by approving the resolution on the left. They then followed through by sponsoring a lunch at a MISTA Response Team Training this summer.

This group is a volunteer organization of business leaders and educators dedicated to living and doing business in Montana; its members are appointed by the governor, assist the Department of Commerce, and sponsor projects that encourage and support economic improvements throughout the state.

MISTA professional development

Over 200 people from the "second-round" of MISTA schools attended MISTA workshops October 4, 6, and 7 in Billings, Missoula, and Great Falls. These workshops focused on writing School Improvement Plans and were the last "traditional" professional development for "second-round" schools.

Start of round three

The regular schedule for MISTA has included three workshops over two school years along with optional Response Team training during the summer. Between September 1996 and March 1998, 17 "pilot" schools participated in MISTA. Since October 1998, nearly 60 additional schools have begun this professional development.

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI), the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC), and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) hope to offer another round of workshops beginning in February. Depending on the number of interested schools, the plan may include regional training in two isolated sections of Montana, as well as a centrally-located conference. As MISTA sessions continue through the steps of the school improvement process during the 2000-2001 school year, some will be scheduled as part of conferences that incorporate other components of OPI's School Improvement Initiative: Profile, Standards, Assessment, Accreditation, and Professional Development. Please contact Jan Clinard (tel: 444-3714; e-mail: *jclinard@state.mt.us)*, if you are interested in participating in this new round of MISTA.

Examining the Change Process, School Accountability, and Accreditation

In his book *Change Forces: The Sequel*, Michael Fullan describes "Christmas tree schools" that take on any innovation without first determining how it fits their mission and goals. MISTA guides schools through a process designed to help them assess their strengths and challenges, set goals aligned with their students' needs, and select strategies and programs that will help them achieve their goals and overcome identified challenges. Engaging in a deliberate school improvement process builds the kind of collaborative culture that nourishes reform efforts.

Response Teams

In August, 32 people from MISTA schools took advantage of the Response Team training. Response Teams (often called "critical friends") distinguish PBA and the NASC's *School Improvement: Focusing on Student Performance* from other school improvement processes. Joining the MISTA family provides participating schools with a knowledgeable pool of responders. By collaborating with NASC and NWREL for professional development and bringing "critical friends" into the schools, MISTA members are discovering what Michael Fullan calls "the deep meaning of outside collaboration." Many believe that accreditation recommendations from Response Teams consisting of peers have more impact than accreditation granted from an agency using a paper and pencil review. Visitations by Response Teams consisting of three to five peers in the school improvement process help schools ensure that:

1) the integrity of the process is maintained,
2) decisions are data- and research-driven,
3) the improvement process is school-based,
4) all the steps are connected,
5) committees are working collaboratively,
6) each step is implemented appropriately, and
7) student learning is central.

For More Information

If you have questions about MISTA, PBA, or other issues related to school improvement, please call Jan Clinard (444-3714) or Linda Peterson, (444-3680). For your professional reading, we recommend Michael Fullan's book *Change Forces: The Sequel*, which was published in 1999. ■

—Jan Clinard, OPI, Curriculum and Assessment Specialist

Dispatches

"Dispatches" are updates by Office of Public Instruction staff. Staff members may be reached at the phone numbers listed or by writing them at the Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

Curriculum and Assessment
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BIG SKY 2000: Finding our Place in the New Millennium

The Montana Association of Teachers of English (MATELA) is gearing up to host a Northwest Regional National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) conference at the Big Sky Resort, April 13-16, 2000. With a lineup of impressive speakers, this conference promises to be a "Big Event." On Thursday, Dan Kemmis of the Center for the Rocky Mountain West will open the conference, after which an array of concurrent sessions and a banquet featuring author James Welch will follow. Together with four sets of concurrent sessions, Friday will feature authors Rick Bass and Mary Clearman Blew, as well as NCTE President Jerome Harste. On Friday, conference planners also hope to offer a series of public lectures sponsored by the Montana Committee for the Humanities. Saturday's major sessions include NCTE's Kathy Egawa, author Ivan Doig, and Rob Quist's Way out West Show, as well as evening entertainment with the band Great Northern. The conference will close with Tom Brokaw on Sunday. In addition to educators, historians, authors, and artists from throughout the Northwest, teachers from the Montana Heritage Project will participate with presentations about their projects and methods for studying local heritage through history, art, literature, science, and oral language.

MATELA has secured rooms in Huntley Lodge, Shoshone, and other condominiums at bargain rates, ranging from $80 for a single to $200 for a three-bedroom unit. Preregistration for the conference is set at $100 until March 1. After that, the conference fee will be $125 and room prices will revert to Big Sky's regular rates. For more information, proposal and registration forms, please call me.

College composition

One of the accomplishments of a team of college and high school composition teachers and directors who met several times during the 1998-99 school year was a leaflet entitled "Looking Ahead to College Composition." These leaflets, which describe policies and practices in Montana higher education regarding placement decisions, waivers, and requirements for composition, were sent to English departments and counselors in all Montana high schools in early September. Please check with your department chair or counselor, or call me for a copy.

Adult Basic Education
Becky Bird, State Director
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In November 1998, I became the State Director for Adult Basic Education (ABE). Many of you may recognize me as the former Gender Equity Coordinator for Vocational Technical Education.

ABE now Title II

In the past nine months we have been busy developing a new state plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy. Adult Basic Education, formerly part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), is now Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. As a part of workforce education, ABE programs now place heavy emphasis on employment This represents a significant shift for adult education, and there are likely to be significant changes in how adult education programs are managed in the future.

ABE priorities

ABE's priorities for the next year will be to complete Montana's five year state plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy, to develop a strategic plan for the field of adult literacy education and professional development, and to explore how technology can be used to enhance programs and services for students statewide.

Science-Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools (SMCNWS)
Patricia B. Johnson, State Coordinator
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The Science and Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools (SMCNWS) provides schools and education-related agencies in Montana, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington with catalytic support that will broaden the effect, accelerate the pace, and increase the effectiveness of regional improvements in science and mathematics education.

Four Eisenhower Professional Development Programs

Currently, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) offers two Eisenhower programs at both the state and national levels. The state-level programs are the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, administered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and the Higher Education DDE Grants, managed through the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE).

At the national level, the two Eisenhower programs are the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC) in Ohio and the ten regional consortia, of which the SMCNWS is one.

Like the Library of Congress, the ENC is a repository, not a lending library. In order to share its extensive collection, ENC manages a comprehensive Web site at <*http://www.enc.org*> and produces many publications. The regional consortia and state-level professional development programs disseminate ENC materials to educators.

New from the ENC

- *ENC Focus-A Magazine for Classroom Innovators* combines the ENC newsletter, *ENC Update*, with the *ENC Focus*, a mini-catalog of education materials in the ENC's collection. The first two issues are titled "Innovative Classroom Materials" and "Inquiry and Problem Solving."
- *Family Involvement in Education* and *Science Professional Development* are the ENC's two newest publications. The science document is a companion to *Mathematics Professional Development*, which was published last fall. All three publications compile the latest information on providing staff development and involving families in education. Contact me if you want a copy of any of these ENC publications.

New *Teacher Change* Web site

The ENC recently produced the new Web site, *Teacher Change: Improving K-12 Mathematics* at <*http://change.enc.org/*>. This project was designed for local, state, regional, and national leaders who are working with teachers on the challenging task of improving K-12 mathematics teaching and learning.

The site offers professional development workshop activities, journal articles on teacher change, teacher narratives, and an overview of school change written by international authorities Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves.

Staff development support program

SMCNWS invites school districts to apply for funding to support staff development projects that produce a measurable change in the way the district delivers and/or assesses science and/or mathematics instruction. Applications must be submitted by a team of two or more educators and must have the district administration's support.

1999-2000 applications should be available in October 1999 on the Internet at <*http://www.col-ed.org/mt*>. Click on "What's Happening" at that site to see some previously successful projects.

Career and Technical Education
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This dispatch was prepared with the writing assistance of Laurie Stelter.

Ready, set, go! on Perkins accountability

This summer has seen the first, the second, and then, finally, the third draft. *But,* you'll soon have the accountability instrument to collect data on the four core indicators required by the Carl Perkins Act of 1998. Keep in mind that this is a transition year and by this coming April, Montana must submit a state plan for the next four years.

We appreciate the supportive attitudes that the administrators and teachers involved with Carl Perkins federal funding have demonstrated. It really helps when we all are working together toward the goal of this legislation: Improving vocational education programs for the benefit of students!

Indicator 1

The reporting on this indicator — the *attainment of challenging academic, vocational, and technical standards* — will be based on the standardized test your district used in 1999. The scores for vocational concentrators in math, science, and reading composites will be documented.

Indicator 2

In order to measure this indicator — the *attainment of a high school diploma or GED* —the *Montana Dropout Statistics Collector's Handbook* will be used to help determine which students were " vocational concentrators" before dropping out of high school. We will also use this document to determine the percentage of vocational concentrators who graduate.

Indicators 3 and 4:

Both of these indicators — *placement in further education or training, employment, or military service* and the *completion of programs for nontraditional training and employment* — will be measured through a telephone survey of "vocational concentrators" who either graduated from high school or obtained their GED during the 1998-99 school year.

Vocational concentrator defined

"Vocational concentrators" are those students who will have received at least three units of vocational course credit during their high school career. A unit is equivalent to two semesters of study. While these credits can be earned in multiple vocational programs, students should be coded in the program area in which they received the majority of their vocational credits.

New Perkins partner

Congratulations to Dr. Arlene Parisot who is the new Director for Workforce Development at the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE).

Dispatches

Dr. Parisot assumed her duties in Helena on July 1, 1999.

The vocational staff at OPI and the Perkins staff at OCHE have been working cooperatively on the state plan that is due to the U.S. Office of Adult and Vocational Education in April 2000.

New staff

Career, Vocational, and Adult Services are now working with a full deck! As in your local school districts, we change and learn as we network with professional staff. We welcome the ideas and methods they bring to us.

It's a pleasure to introduce the newest staff in our unit:

✔ Cheryl Graham, *Business/Marketing Education Specialist*, joined the staff in mid-June after 16 years with the St. Regis School District.

✔ David Strong, *Industrial and Technology Education Specialist*, was hired Nov. 1, 1998 while under contract with a school district. He assumed his position at OPI full-time in mid-June.

✔ Carl Stevens, *School-to-Work Specialist*, assumed his duties in late May, after serving as the AMERICA READS coordinator at OPI.

Family & Consumer Sciences
Laurie Stelter, Specialist
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lstelter@state.mt.us

Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America

After 54 years of the name "Future Homemakers of America," delegates at the 1999 National Leadership Meeting voted 139 to 38 (with two abstentions) in favor of renaming their organization the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Montana's two voting delegates voted with the majority.

The new name took effect immediately due to the language in the Montana Association Constitution and Bylaws that specifies that the state constitution automatically reflects any national revisions that change it.

Why the change?

"Because our name had become outdated, we found it much harder to communicate to teens what our organization is really about—building leadership skills and addressing important personal, family, work, and societal issues," said Brandon Abbott, 18-year-old FCCLA National President. "Our hope is that the new name will help get teens past the 'homemaker' stigma and into the details of how much work we do with the kinds of issues teens today really care about, such as school violence, family relations, and career preparation."

Montana sent 104 delegates to the 1999 National Leadership Meeting where they joined 5,500 other students from around the nation. Of those, 56 continued Montana's record of achievement in STAR (Students Taking Action with Recognition) Events that previous Montana FHA/HERO delegations have worked to establish.

STAR Medals

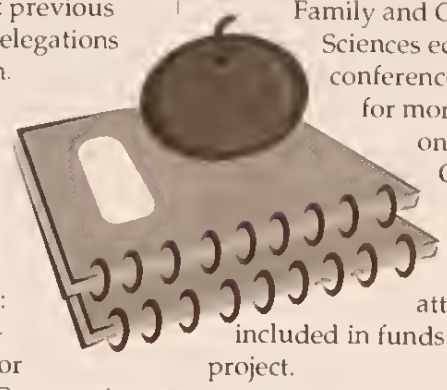
Students from the following chapters earned GOLD medals in their respective events: *Big Timber*–Skills for Life: Senior • *Cascade* – Parliamentary Procedure: Junior • *Dillon* – Interpersonal Communications: Senior • *Ennis* – Focus on Children Display: Junior and Skills for Life: Junior • *Hardin* – Chapter Showcase Display: Junior and Chapter Showcase Manual: Senior • *Park City* – Chapter Showcase Manual: Junior and Chapter Service Project Display: Senior • *Reedpoint* – Chapter Service Project Display: Junior and Applied Technology: Occupational • *Stanford* – Job Interview: Junior • *Twin Bridges* – Chapter Showcase Display: Senior and Focus on Children Display: Senior

The following chapters earned SILVER medals in their respective events:
Carter Co./Ekalaka – Illustrated Talk: Senior • *Dillon* – Applied Technology: Senior and Chapter Service Project Manual: Junior • *Park City* – Parliamentary Procedure: Senior and Job Interview: Senior • *Sunburst* – Parliamentary Procedure: Occupational • *Valier* – Entrepreneurship: Senior

Students Taking on Prevention

Montana FCCLA is one of 11 pilot states participating in the Students Taking on Prevention (STOP) anti-violence project sponsored by national FCCLA and the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services. STOP originated during 1997-98 when Dusty Sveum (Sunburst) was serving on the FHA/HERO National Executive Council (NEC). The officers on the NEC decided that FHA/HERO members needed to do something to address the horror in the news on December 1, 1997, that gunfire had interrupted a prayer meeting in a small Kentucky high school, resulting in the deaths of three students and critically injuring five others. The high school's FHA president was one of the injured students.

As a result of the interest and efforts of that national officer team, funding will provide two FCCLA members and their chapter adviser with training to learn to recognize, report, and prevent violent activities in schools. These teams will go back to their local communities and train other students about youth violence prevention. Chapters will need to participate in the training to receive a video and other program materials. The training will be conducted in at least two different Montana locations. Watch the Family and Consumer Sciences educational conference on METNET for more information on STOP training. One night of lodging and two meals per team attending will be included in funds from the project.



Nutrition Education and Training
Katie Bark, R.D., Coordinator
994-5641
uhdkb@montana.edu

Afterschool snack program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will now reimburse school districts for nutritious snacks served to children through age 18 who are participating in afterschool care programs.

To qualify, a school district must operate the lunch component of the National School Lunch Program, and the afterschool care program must provide educational or enrichment activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment after the end of the school day. Both public and private schools can participate.

Educational or enrichment activities

Educational or enrichment activities may include arts and crafts, homework assistance, life skills, and computer or remedial education. Although competitive sport teams are *not* eligible, afterschool care programs that include a sports activity as part of their enrichment program may qualify.

Licensing requirements

Participating afterschool care programs are not required to be licensed *unless* a state or local requirement for licensing exists.

Eligibility requirements

School sites may participate as area-eligible sites or regular sites.

✔ *Area-eligible:* When 50 percent of the school site enrollment is approved free or reduced, all snacks are reimbursed at the free rate. The meal count is taken by counting the number of students receiving a reimbursable snack. No child can be charged for a snack in an area-eligible school. The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) determines a school's eligibility based on the Annual October Report each school submits.

✔ *Regular:* When less than 50 percent of the school site enrollment is approved free or reduced, snacks are reimbursed based on the free, reduced, or paid status of each student. A counting method is in place to place each student in the correct claiming category.

The kinds of snacks served

Snacks must contain at least two from the following four different components: fluid milk, meat or meat alternate, vegetable(s) or fruit(s) or full-strength vegetable or fruit juice, whole-grain or enriched bread or cereal. Portion size requirements vary with the age of the children being served.

Required record keeping

At a minimum, school food authorities must maintain the following records:

- documentation to support an area-eligible or regular site requirements;
- meal count sheets;
- daily roster or sign-in sheet; and
- documentation of compliance with Meal Pattern Requirements (daily production record)

Reimbursements and retroactive claims

Schools may claim reimbursement for one snack, per child, per day. Children may participate through age 18, and if a child's nineteenth birthday occurs during the school year, reimbursement may be claimed for that student during the reminder of the school year.

Schools that served snacks to eligible children in eligible sites and programs prior to issuance of this announcement and that have maintained appropriate records may claim reimbursement retroactively to that date or the date they began operations if they began after October 1, 1998.

Eligible programs serve children only *after* their school day has ended; under no circumstances may snacks be reimbursed in programs that operated either before or during the child's school day. Schools cannot receive reimbursement for snacks that were served on the weekends or holidays, including vacation periods.

How to apply

Contact OPI's School Food Services Division (444-2501). For more information about this afterschool program, visit the website <*www.fns.usda.gov/cnd*>.

Eisenhower Professional Development Program
Chris Provance, Specialist
444-4436
cprovance@state.mt.us

Mini-grants for teachers

The Eisenhower Professional Development State-Level Program is piloting a competitive mini-grant opportunity for school teams wishing to implement a researched teaching strategy in their mathematics and or science classes. The purpose of the program, called DARTS — Discovering and Applying Researched Teaching Strategies — is to gather information on the impact of researched math and science teaching strategies on students. For a copy of the RFP, please call Donna MacDonald (444-1852).

Dispatches

Presidential Awards information sent to all schools

Each year, 12 mathematics and science teachers are selected as Montana State-Level Awardees for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Awardees receive $750 to be used in their classrooms along with recognition at local and state events. Four of the 12 state awardees, will be chosen by a national selection committee as Montana's Presidential Awards For Excellence (PAEs) in Mathematics and Science Teaching. PAEs receive $2,500 for classroom use and recognition at a national celebration and at state and local events. PAE brochures and posters have been sent to each building principal. For a complete nomination packet or additional brochures, please call Donna MacDonald (444-1852).

Eisenhower Professional Development Survey

Thank you to all who participated in the Eisenhower Teacher Self Assessment and Professional Development Survey. Over 2,000 teachers responded to the state wide survey. District, regional, and state data have been sent to all participating districts. If you would like further information regarding survey results, or you would like to know how your district can participate next year, please call me.

Professional development information:

The following three opportunities for professional development have recently crossed my desk. They bear some looking into.

Collaborative Action Research with Richard Sagor: Dick Sagor, educational leader in the field of Action Research, has developed three options for district or consortium staff development in the area of action research. These options are all ongoing and provide a model for job-embedded professional development, which will both excite and motivate even the reluctant teacher researcher. For information contact Dick Sagor (tel: 360-834-3503; e-mail: *rdsagor@ISIE.org).*

NWREL Mathematics Problem Solving Model: This model, developed by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratories (NWREL), helps teachers meet the challenges of teaching and assessing open-ended problem solving. The model's scoring guide helps teachers with the complex and rewarding task of assessing students' problem-solving abilities. Individual professional development packages can be created to meet district needs. In the district, year-long package, leadership cadres explore assessment issues in-depth, gain expertise in using the model, and develop skills in providing quality professional development for their colleagues. For information contact Bob McIntosh, NWREL Mathematics Associate (tel: 503-275-9594; e-mail: *mcintosr@nwrel.org).*

Free Annenberg/CPB Channel Workshops: These eight workshops, which will be broadcast between October 19 and December 16, 1999, demonstrate how light is a common thread that runs through many areas of science. The workshops connect to real world phenomena by exploring the behavior of light and its role in the transformation of energy. Workshop guides are available. For more information call 800-228-8030 or visit <*http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/sheddinglight*>.

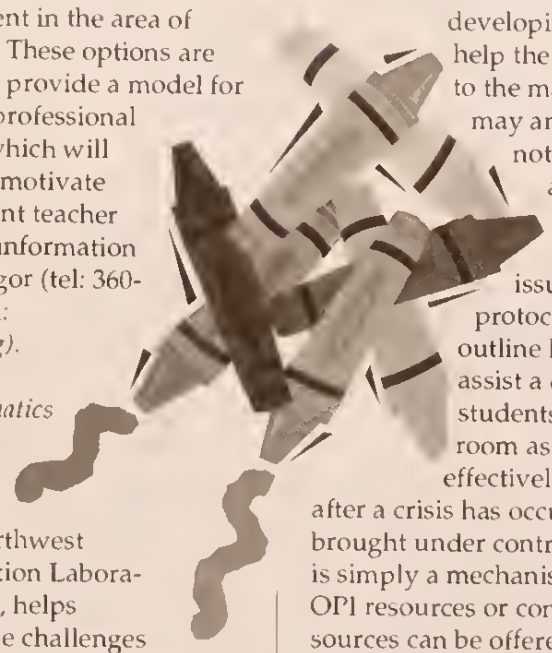
Safe & Drug-Free Schools Program
Rick Chiotti, Director
444-1963
rchiotti@state.mt.us

Safe Schools

Safe schools are on everyone's list of the most important things necessary to ensure our children have safe and drug-free learning environments. As one effort to assist schools in identifying and accessing resources that can help them be (or become) safer, OPI 's Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program has set up a Safe Schools site on OPI's Home page. There, schools can find information on resource materials, workshops and meetings, commercial products, model school crisis plans (including a crisis management resource guide), and a list of links to related Web sites. To access this site, go to OPI's Home page at <*http://www.metnet.state.us*> and click on the *Safe Schools* icon.

Crisis Response Protocol

If a Montana school should ever have a crisis situation, OPI is developing a protocol to help the district respond to the many issues that may arise. The intent is not to have OPI assume jurisdiction over any crisis response issues; rather, the protocol is intended to outline how OPI can assist a district return students to the classroom as efficiently and effectively as possible after a crisis has occurred and been brought under control. The protocol is simply a mechanism by which OPI resources or contact to resources can be offered to a district. We hope to never have to use this protocol and that no school should ever have a tragic crisis. That being said, we also want to be as prepared as possible to provide whatever help we can to Montana students and their schools.



Traffic Education
David Huff, Director
444-4396
dhuff@state.mt.us

Traffic Education Reimbursements

The reimbursement rate for traffic education this year was $93.20. Schools received their payment in August.

Legal opinion on higher fees for nonpublic school students

In a memo, Office of Public Instruction (OPI) attorney Janice F. Doggett made the following comments:

"You have asked me to address whether a school district may charge nonpublic school students more than they charge public school students for driver's education courses. It is my opinion that school districts may not charge different amounts for different classes of students without demonstrating a governmental necessity. Without the showing of a governmental necessity, a district would be violating the equal protection rights of the nonpublic school students. If a district intends to charge nonpublic school students more for driver's education they must demonstrate that there is a governmental interest involved.... I, however, cannot think of any governmental reason why a district would be charging the nonpublic school students more.... In fact, if the nonpublic school students are all from a sectarian school they may be able to claim that they are being discriminated based on religion."

Operation Lifesaver Data

A collision now occurs between a vehicle or person and a train every 115 minutes. A person is 40 times more likely to die in a collision with a train than in any other type of collision that can occur on the highway.

The final statistics that Montana Operation Lifesaver compiled for collisions at railroad crossings in 1998 include:

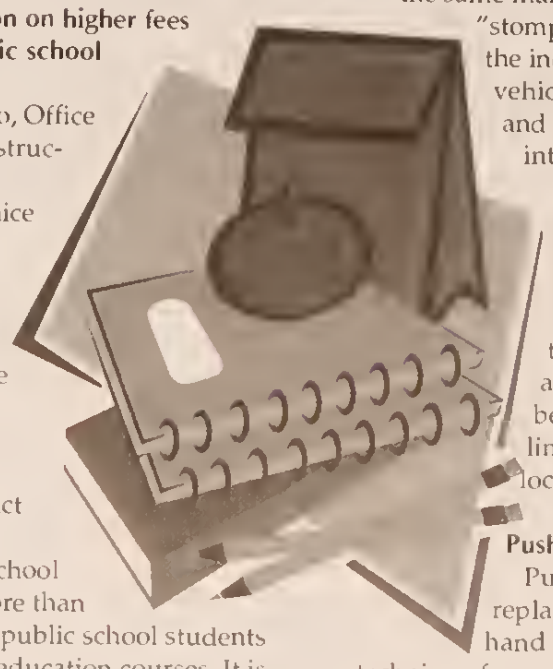
- Collisions, US: 3,508 MT: 27;
- Deaths, US: 431, MT: 4;
- Injury, US: 1,303, MT: 11.

This shows that Montana had five fewer collisions in 1998 than in 1997, but two more people died as a result of those collisions. The number of injuries stayed constant.

Limitations of anti-lock brakes

At the Idaho Traffic Education Conference this summer, Dr. Terry Kline demonstrated the limitation of anti-lock brakes. It is true that you can "stomp and steer" with the system as long as you use limited steering input. But if you steer more than the equivalent of a lane change — making the direction of force on the front tire more sideways than forward — you limit the ability of the wheel to keep rolling after each of the micro-pulse brake actions the system uses. If the wheel cannot roll, it slides, preventing the vehicle from completing the intended turn.

Dr. Kline showed how trail braking — braking hard then backing off to where anti-lock braking action stopped — allows him to complete a tight turn. But in the same maneuver, if he "stomped and steered" as the industry touts, the vehicle understeered and went wide of the intended path. This occurred due to sliding front wheels.



These facts prove that instructors should know and teach both the benefits and the limitation sof anti-lock brakes.

Push-pull steering

Push-pull steering is replacing hand-over-hand steering as the best technique for most highway driving where large amounts of steering input are needed. It is also being touted for steering where small amounts of input are needed. Changes in vehicle technology lead the reasons for this shift in thinking. Consider the following grounds for push-pull steering:

- on new cars, steering ratios are tighter and there is less tendency to oversteer with the push-pull,
- anti-lock brakes work best with less steering,
- the hands stay low on the steering wheel, which is the more desired location with air-bag equipped cars,
- both hands stay on the steering wheel, and
- with practice it lends itself to very smooth steering.

When much steering input is needed very quickly, hand-over-hand is still the champion. This is useful in severe skid situations. The "nine and three" hand position with one quarter to one half steering inputs is still the preferred method for most emergency evasive maneuvers.

Vehicles are changing—are you?

Technology is not only changing your classrooms, it is drastically changing the vehicles we drive. As much as we don't like to change lesson plans and driving habits that have worked well for us in the past, please consider this: If you are not teaching the current best practices for the current technologies, where will your students learn the information they need?

For instance, here's a challenge for traffic educators: Some new vehicles have electronic traction devices; once they lose traction, the correct procedure is to press on the accelerator. The transmission will then start slowing the vehicle (even with the accelerator pressed) until traction is regained or until the vehicle reaches one mile per hour. To reset, you have to lift your foot off the accelerator.

Will your class provide the skills your students need to learn about which vehicles have which technology and then to master the skills necessary to use the technology correctly? Maybe we should be using owner's manuals as text supplements in the classroom.

Bulletin Board

Listings in the Bulletin Board do not necessarily imply endorsement by the Office of Public Instruction.

Poster/Photo Contests

Montana Immunization Program

The Montana Immunization Program is sponsoring it's fourth annual poster contest for Montana fifth graders. The contest gives participants a chance to learn about disease prevention, wellness, and the benefits of the immunizations they will need to enter the sixth grade. This year's theme is *Staying Healthy is Cool – Vaccines Rule!* The top three state winners receive savings bonds and their artwork is used to make posters that are displayed throughout the state.

For more information or to begin planning for this event, contact your school nurse, local public health or tribal health nurse, your partners at the Montana Immunization Program (444-5580), or visit the MT Immunization Web Site at < *http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/hpsd/pubheal/disease/immuniz/index.htm* >.

Montana Historical Society

The State Historic Preservation Office has selected *Historic Schools* as the theme for its annual preservation poster contest. Our next poster will feature the contest's winning photograph, depicting one of Montana's historic schools. The photo contest is open to everyone — teachers, students, photographers, history buffs, classes or groups. Entries must feature schools either currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places or a school for which a nomination is in progress. Current or historic photos will all be considered; they just must be received by November 30, 1999. For an entry form with more information or to learn whether your school is listed or qualifies for listing in the National Register, contact Chere Jiusto (tel: 443-2114; e-mail: *cjiusto@state.mt.us).*

Montana parks

The Parks Division is conducting its ninth annual poster contest. This year's theme is *Who ONCE Lived in Montana State Parks...Historic Homes of Our Parks.* The contest is open to all fifth grade students. This year, the parks division will provide a lesson plan that will help teachers integrate the contest into their curriculum work. The packets will be available January 1, 2000. For more information, contact Debbie Cheek (444-4701).

Teaching shortages

Continued from page 3

Educational programs affected

The lack of applicants in these positions pose difficulties, especially for rural schools. Of the 92 schools that responded, 18 indicated that staff shortages had forced them to drop or alter programs, and nine reported employing non-certified teachers under the emergency authorization of employment statute.

Unfortunately, no easy solution is available. Generally higher salaries in other states and continuing funding shortages make it difficult for Montana schools, especially those in rural areas, to recruit and keep new teachers. ■

— Don Freshour, OPI Certification and Licensure Director

CALENDAR

December 1999
2- 3: Practical Action from a Problem-Based Approach (3-pt. Prof dev. For Family & Consumer Sci. Teachers) Bozeman—Laurie Stelter 444-2059 or *lstelter@state.mt.us* or Julie Salzer *rolfiesgrl@hotmail.com*
2- 4: National Science Teachers Assoc. (NSTA) Western Area Convention, Reno, Nevada—National Science Teachers Assn. 703-243-7100 or *conventions@nsta.org* or *http://www.nsta.org/conv/reno.htm*
8- 11: NASDVTEC Fall Conference, Orlando, Florida—Angela King, 202-737-0303, fax: 202- 737-1106 or *nasdvtec@iris.org*

January 2000
12- 15: Western States Certification Conference, Tucson, Arizona—Don & Janet Hair, 30180 Floral Grove, Cathedral City, CA 92234-2594
20- 21: Board of Public Education Meeting, Helena—Cindy DeTienne, BPE, 444-6576
27- 28: Certification Standards & Practices Advisory Council, Helena, 2500 Broadway—Cindy DeTienne, 444-6576

February 2000
2- 4: Montana Assoc. of Elementary and Middle School Principals (MAEMSP) Annual Convention, Missoula —MAEMSP 442-2510, fax: 442-2518, or *samjs@mt.net*

March 2000
23- 24: Board of Public Education Meeting, Havre—Cindy DeTienne, 444-6576
23- 25: Family, Career & Community Leaders of America State Leadership Conference, Billings—Laurie Stelter 444-2059 or *lstelter@state.mt.us*
25- 27: ASCD Annual Conference & Exhibit Show, New Orleans, LA—Assn. for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 800-933-2723, fax: 703-575-5400, or *http://www.ascd.org*

April 2000
1- 5: Joint NCATE/State Teacher Education Program Review, UM–Missoula—Don Freshour, OPI, 444-2577, *dfreshour@state.mt.us*
9- 12: Montana Indian Education Assoc. (MIEA) Conference, Billings—Theodora Weatherwax, PO Box 1018, Browning, MT 59417, 338-2725, fax: 338-2607
13-16: Northwest Regional National Council of Teachers of English Conference: *Big Sky 2000: Finding Our Place in the New Millennium*, Big Sky—Jan Clinard 444-3714 or *jclinard@ state.mt.us*

May 2000
4- 5. Certification Standards & Practices Advisory Council, UM Center at Salmon Lake, Montana —Cindy DeTienne 444-6576
18- 19: Board of Public Education Meeting, Kalispell — Cindy DeTienne, 444-6576

July 2000
6- 7: Board of Public Education Meeting, Helena —Cindy DeTienne, 444-6576
11- 14: International Reading Assn. World Congress, Auckland, New Zealand— June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664
19- 21: Certification Standards & Practices Advisory Council Forum & Meeting, Helena—Cindy DeTienne, 444-6576

This document printed at government expense. 14,000 copies were produced and distributed to schools, educational organizations, and other interested individuals at an estimated cost of 19¢ per copy.

Lance

Continued from page 7

liked putting things away, and had a good memory for where things went. Because he had difficulty lifting the large ketchup container to refill the bottles, he quickly lost interest in that task, and windows that looked out on traffic distracted him.

Hamilton's Marcus Daley Hospital provided Lance's next job trial. He started in the purchasing department placing stickers on inventory. During the course of the trial, Lance's production and quality increased, and he demonstrated that he was capable of quality control (placing the sticker accurately) but not too interested in paying attention to the necessary detail. After a month, he seemed to become bored with the repetitive nature of the job.

We carved out another task at the hospital that involved pushing a cart from office to office to pick up paper for recycling. Lance really enjoyed the increased movement and mobility this task involved, and he seemed happy to interact with folks along the way. He quickly learned the route and started doing pieces of the task independently within days.

Unfortunately, this job trial ended after one week, but it told us that Lance could make a great contribution making deliveries; his outgoing personality would be valued, and a lot of quality control was unnecessary.

The "ideal job"

We now had a vision of a job in which Lance would be successful — we just needed to find an employer. We reconvened our Profile team, revisited what did and didn't work for Lance, and agreed upon the ideal characteristics of a job for Lance. Then we generated a new list of possible employers. When that list did not pan out, we changed our thinking about the delivery task.

After many brainstorming sessions, we opted to look for a business that needed a delivery service. We approached Vicki and Korly Stiller, owners of A Place to Ponder Bakery and Café in Hamilton, and asked if Lance could contribute something valuable to their business. They welcomed the idea, and this September Lance started *A Place to Ponder Comes To You!* with a van, a beverage cart to keep his sandwiches and pop cold, and a helium tank so people who order birthday cakes from the bakery can also buy balloons.

The future

I doubt Lance will ever drive his own van, and he will likely need some ongoing job support. But he will be employed, and he will be a contributing community member and taxpayer. Our goal is that within one year, Lance will be able to hire a driver who will both be a business partner and provide Lance with some support so he no longer needs a paid job coach.

In closing

Lance and his team applied for and were accepted as participants in a Social Security work incentive program called the PASS Plan and the United Cerebral Palsy Association's Choice Access Project, which offers people with physical disabilities money to help them become employed. These two programs provided important financial resources, which supported the hunt for Lance's "ideal job," but I don't think his employment was contingent on that money. Instead, I believe that lack of financial constraints allowed us to get creative, which is really how we helped Lance. ■

— Ellen Condon, Transition Project, Rural Institute on Disabilities

Editor's note: For more information about Transition Planning, Work Experience, and Vocational Profiles for students with disabilities, please contact Ellen Condon at the Rural Institute on Disabilities (888-648-7267). For more information about Social Security Work Incentives for Students and young adults with disabilities, contact Marlene Disburg (800-732-0323).